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## Synopses of Important Articles.

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THE BUDDING ROD. By REV. HUGH MACMILLAN, D.D., LL.D., in *The Expositor* for November, 1893. Pp. 362-373.

The story of the rebellion of Korah is given briefly with its cause and its punishment, and the fact noted that the rebels in demanding the priestly office for the entire tribe of Levi were blind to their own interest, since the office thus cheapened might then with equal reason be claimed by every head of a family throughout Israel and an attempt be made to return to the patriarchal system.

The severity of the punishment was necessary to vindicate once for all the authority of Aaron as God's appointed high priest.

The test of the rods by which the rest of the people were to be convinced was of the nature of decision by lots. The practice of casting lots to obtain an impartial decision was a common one in ancient times. The methods and instruments used were various, but the principle was the same in all, a belief that the Deity thus directly communicated his decision.

The method used in this case was a novel one. The remainder of the article is taken up with thoughts on the rod and its budding. The twelve rods laid up in the Tabernacle were the ancestral staves, and the important part which this staff plays in the East as the symbol of authority is dwelt upon. The staves thus in a peculiar sense represented the tribes. The several incidents are then brought out by which the character of the event as a miracle is enhanced. The rod of Aaron was no recent cutting from the parent stock which might under proper conditions of moisture have shown signs of life. It was an old, dry stick, with bark worn smooth by constant handling. Then, too, it was not in a fertile place, exposed to quickening influences of sun and rain, that the rod budded, but in the desert and laid away in the darkness of the night and the inner chamber of the Tabernacle. And finally this budding was accomplished in a single night.

Yet God's economy in the use of miracles is shown in his choice of a staff cut from an almond tree, which by nature is the first of all trees to spring to life and puts forth its buds before the leaves. And the bark had not been peeled from the staff. Moreover, it was probably the same staff that had been used in other miracles of testimony, as that of the serpent at Horeb, and before Pharaoh, and in dividing the Red Sea.

The budding rod is typical of the perpetual life of the Aaronic priesthood. It was typical of self sacrifice, since a bud or a fruit is an arrested branch, diverted from a selfish growth to give up its life for beauty or for food, in

contrast to the barren fig tree whose selfishness our Lord cursed. In this way the budding rod was typical of true greatness and authority which manifests itself not in ruling but in serving. The rebels had been seeking the priesthood from selfish motives, that they might lord it over their brethren, but God had appointed Aaron to the office to minister. The rod was typical of Israel, "the rod of his inheritance," in whom God purposed that all the nations should be blessed, and finally it was typical of Christ, whom the chief priests and Pharisees would have put aside, but God chose him and rejected them, and by his resurrection, typified in the budding of the rod, Christ was proved to be the chosen one, the Messiah.

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The article is throughout homiletical, rather than critical or controversial, and intimates no question as to the supernatural element or the historicity of the account.

D. A. W.

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ST. PAUL'S CONCEPTION OF CHRISTIANITY. XI. WITHOUT AND WITHIN.

By PROFESSOR A. B. BRUCE, D.D., in *The Expositor* for November, 1893. Pp. 348-361.

What is the connection in Paul's thought between the religious and the moral? Christianity, as taught by Paul, seems on its face to be religious or even theological, rather than ethical. As such it offers two guarantees for holiness, the moral dynamic of faith, and the influence of the Holy Spirit. But even with these high motives, the realities of conduct fall far below the ideal. What does Paul think of this incongruity, and what the connection in his mind between the objective and the subjective, the real and the ideal?

The crudest solution is to find in Romans chaps. 1-5; on the one hand, and chaps. 6-8 on the other, two incomparable theories of salvation, the forensic and the mystic. But such an interpretation is wholly unworthy of the apostle, who had gotten far beyond experimental thinking when he wrote the Epistle to the Romans.

The other extreme of interpretation would expound, by ingenious exegesis, either section of the epistle in terms of the other; and which of the apparently different types of thought is to be resolved into the other will depend on the interpreter's theological bias. One would see in both sections only objective righteousness, only subjective righteousness. But it is entirely legitimate for one to insist that the two aspects of Pauline teaching must be allowed to stand side by side, and ought not to be explained the one into the other. Justification and regeneration are two acts of divine grace, sovereign and independent—the only nexus between them being God's gracious will. Dr. Stevens, in his work on "The Pauline Theology," attempts to soften this merely external view of the relation between justification and regeneration by making the distinction simply that between form and essence. Justification by faith is merely the formal principle of salvation,

while the real principle is moral renewal through union with Christ. But to this, it must be objected that Dr. Stevens imputes to St. Paul a distinction which exists only for the modern consciousness. Objective righteousness was to Paul more than a form, it was a great essential reality.

The real explanation is to be gotten from the psychological history of the apostle's thought on these themes. First, his escape from *legalism*. He finds rest for a moment in the ideal of righteousness as realized in Christ. But the spiritual forces at work in his soul lead him to aspire higher. His faith about Christ is incessantly active and the Holy Spirit works a mighty change in his heart. But the potent influence of the flesh constantly disturbs his serenity and blinds his hope. These are the three elements that furnish food for the apostle's reflection—faith, the Spirit, and the flesh. And how were these facts of the Christian consciousness to be formulated and correlated? The apostle could not be at rest until he had a way of thinking on these matters, and the results of his meditation lie before us in Romans chaps. 6–8. They consist of his doctrine of faith as a spiritual force, his doctrine of the Holy Spirit as the immanent source of Christian holiness, and his doctrine of the flesh as the great obstructive to holiness.

It follows then that the doctrine of objective holiness met the spiritual need of his conversion crisis; but the doctrine of subjective righteousness came in due season to solve problems arising out of Christian experience. These two doctrines, when they had both been revealed, lived together peacefully in Paul's mind. This psychological explanation is much safer and much more supported by fact than that of certain theologians who ascribe Paul's distinctive doctrines to Pharaistic and Hellenistic sources. The true key to the Pauline theology is that personality of the man as revealed in a remarkable religious experience. Paul found, when he entered the church, that the doctrines of faith and the Holy Spirit were universally regarded as *veræ causæ* within the spiritual sphere. In his conception of the subtle nature of faith, he distanced all his contemporaries. The *faith-mysticism* is all his own, it is the peculiar poetic creation of an individual idiosyncrasy. Paul was gifted at once with an original intellect, an extraordinary moral intensity, and a profoundly mystical religious temperament, and no doctrine could pass through his mind without undergoing a profound change.

As to the relation of these two aspects of the apostle's double doctrine of righteousness, no trace of the psychological development is found in the Epistles. In Romans, the doctrine of subjective righteousness is set over against the notion that reception of "the righteousness of God" by faith is compatible with indifference to personal holiness; in Galatians it is presented as the true method of attaining holiness as against a false method. In Romans, the opponent is a man who conceives it possible to combine reception of God's grace with continuance in sin; but in Galatians, he is a man who earnestly desires to be righteous in heart and life, and fails to see that he can reach that goal along the line of faith.

C. E. W.

THE PLACE OF CHRIST IN MODERN THOUGHT. By PROFESSOR C. A. BECKWITH, in *The Andover Review* for July-August, 1893.

The modern scientific spirit has vindicated the humanity of Jesus. The question which we have to answer is not whether Christ is human, but whether he is anything more than human; or rather, perhaps, being human whether he is all that even man may become. In this paper we wish to trace some of the recent modes of viewing the person of Christ from the point of view of anti-supernaturalism, of literary and historical criticism, of idealism, of experience, of a modification of sinless perfection, and of purely ethical sonship; and to indicate wherein they seem defective.

All the anti-supernaturalistic theories of Christ unite in the characteristic premise that the nature of Christ is simply that of man. The naturalistic and supernaturalistic views of the person of Christ spring from two fundamentally divergent tendencies of human thought. They are mutually exclusive. There are but two ways in which the anti-supernaturalistic view of the person of Christ may prevail. One—by showing it to be the only interpretation of the Christian facts, either by reducing the Christian facts to the grade of common events, or, while admitting that they are exceptional, to account for them on the ground that they are due to forces resident in human nature. The most favorable word that can at present be spoken for naturalism is that it is an hypothesis that awaits its verification. The other way by which the anti-supernaturalistic theory may prevail is by the gradual change, on the part of the church, in its mode of conceiving of those elements which have been held as essential to its Redeemer. No doubt within this century a vast change has come over Christian thought. A neglected element of Christology has been restored to its rightful place. But though the human element in Christ has been shown more clearly, the divine element will not be rejected, but will be seen in the human more gloriously manifested.

Passing to the documents we find them in dispute. But when the last word of New Testament criticism shall have been said, we do not fear lest enough indisputable materials will remain to form the picture of a divine-human person who is at once natural and supernatural, consistent with himself, capable of vindication on grounds both of history and reason.

Another mode of representing the person of Christ is the idealistic. This underestimates the importance of the historic Christ. It is said, for example, that it does not matter whether the signs which the evangelists ascribe to him were really wrought by him, or are open to some other interpretation more in accord with the modern idea of the world, provided we believe in the spirit of sympathy out of which they were said to spring, and by which the evils of society are in all times alleviated. The essential truth of the traditional view of the birth and the resurrection, respectively, are the sonship of all souls from God, and the continued personal identity after death of all men as well as of Christ. One need not wholly condemn the philosophy with which this movement is allied, since, by showing the essential unity and spirituality of

the universe, it has gone far towards counteracting the materialistic and deistic tendencies. It claims to be constructive in its treatment of the ethical spirit of Christianity. It makes its appeal to what is noblest in man—his rational and spiritual nature. It sets free a rigid dogmatism from bondage to the letter. And yet its promise is delusive, for the principle is defective and the method faulty. The historic person of Christ has the wholly exceptional interest that in it the real and the ideal are identical. It is necessary for us, not to let go, but to hold fast, this fact, and even more deeply to penetrate into its historic reality, for only thus can we rise to the full significance of the ideal of truth and love, of God and man, which apart from this fact the reason has vainly sought to picture for itself.

There is another view of the person of Christ closely allied to this. It has been said, whatever is true of the historic Christ of the gospels or of Paul, we have a living Christ witnessed to in our own experience. Experience, however, by itself, as it cannot create, so it is unable to preserve a true knowledge of the living Christ. Experience of Christ is dependent on the historic record. The record furnishes but the material and the form of the Christian knowledge of the Redeemer. The question is not what is possible for a day, but what is essential for the continuous preservation, the accurate and robust development, of Christian belief.

We come next to the question of the sinlessness of Christ. Than this no fact has greater apologetic value for estimating the person of Christ. With it stands and falls not only his work as Redeemer, but also his person as divine. Each objection to the sinlessness of Christ rests on an assumption. The question is primarily one not of dogma, but of fact. If the gospels contain any reliable testimony concerning Christ, they furnish many statements unquestionably originating with him, which can only be explained on the ground of his sinlessness, and they present his self-consciousness not only as free from any shadow of sin, but as ever radiant with the unclouded approval of the Father. There is no reasonable doubt that the church was founded on the implicit belief in the perfection of his earthly life; and every group of apostolic witnesses confirms to us this fact. More and more Christianity is seen to be bound up with Christ. As a redemptive religion, it stands or falls with him.

Suppose that he was sinlessly perfect, one who may be truly called Son of God, in what sense shall we use the appellation? Do the Christian facts warrant us in speaking of metaphysical or only of an ethical Sonship? We recognize the value of the ethical conception. It has freed Christology from the metaphysical bondage of the past. It results in a more vital thought of the Fatherhood of God, and of the work of Christ as the ideal man, in whom life finds its completion. As a regenerative force it will be manifest in the preaching of the gospel as an evangel of redeeming love. Yet this conception is incomplete. There are rational presuppositions which underlie all facts. The reason seeks for causes. The ethical view does not harmonize

either with the view of the New Testament writers who affirm the pr  existence of Christ as the Son of God, or with the self-witness of Christ. In the Johanne gospel there are positive assertions of a timeless existence apart from this world. The interpretation which declares Christ to be the eternal Word, the Son of God become incarnate in Jesus Christ, makes belief in his sinlessness credible, justifies the homage which both the reason and the heart of man have rendered to him, and vindicates the claim of universal Lordship which he asserted for himself. Another objection to the purely ethical conception of the Sonship of Christ is its relation to redemption. To Paul and John, and the author of the letter to the Hebrews, the significance and validity of Christ's work for the benefit of sinners lay not simply in what he did, but also and especially in the nature of his person as divine-human, who being pre-existent became incarnate, and dwelt among us full of grace and truth. According to them, he was the human manifestation of God, the distinctive aim of whose mission was to deliver men from sin through the self-sacrifice of divine love. The virtue of his atoning work lay, not in his divinity apart from humanity, nor in his humanity apart from divinity, but in his personality, which drew its contents from his divine and human nature.

The supreme duty of our time is to gain and guard an accurate knowledge of the historic Christ. In our apprehension of him we must be absolutely guided by what he knew himself to be—the Son of God and Son of Man, the Saviour of the world.

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This paper was delivered as an address at the inauguration of the author as Buck Professor of Christian Theology and Lecturer on Church Polity in Bangor Theological Seminary. The paper shows a clear insight into the various phases of modern thought concerning the person of Christ, and a strong grasp of the Christian conception.

T. H. R.

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SIN. By REV. R. W. DALE, D.D., LL.D., in *The Expositor* for September, 1893.

“Sin is lawlessness” (1 John 3 : 4). John means that lawlessness is of the very essence of sin ; that in every sin there is a disregard of the divine law which should determine not only the acts and the words of men, but their spirit and temper. The Authorized Version reads : “Sin is the transgression of the law.” This, though less accurate, seems simpler and clearer than the new. The law is God's law, and has absolute authority over conduct. It determines how we ought to regulate our *personal life* ; it determines our *duty to others* ; it determines our *duty to God*.

But what is transgression ? According to the common meaning of the word, it is a definite and voluntary act. For example, to transgress the law which requires us to speak the truth is to tell a wilful lie. But there are sins which are not included in this definition. It is sinful not to be grateful for kindness ; but though a man may be ashamed of his ingratitude and feel the

guilt of it, the will has no power to command gratitude. Envy, jealousy, covetousness, suspicion and distrust, pride, vanity—all these are sinful ; they are resisted by a good man because they are sinful ; they could have no place in a heart perfectly free from sin ; but the will though it may prevent them from breaking out into evil words and evil deeds, cannot extinguish them. While they remain in the heart a man is conscious of sin and of guilt, even when the whole force of the will is being exerted to conquer them. There is sin and there is righteousness, not merely in acts and words which are voluntarily done and spoken, in thoughts and feelings which are voluntarily permitted to take possession of the mind and heart, but also in the very elements of our life. Every conception of sin is fatally defective in which this fact does not hold a large place. There is sin and there is righteousness in what we are as well as in what we do.

Under the law of heredity the definite moral evils which are constitutionally present in parents reappear in the children. There is what may be described as a community of moral life between those who have descended from the same ancestors ; for good as well as for evil, they are one. But though this is true, a man does not condemn himself the less because he knows that the sins of which he is guilty are the sins of which his fathers were guilty. There is also a community of moral life between all mankind. Is it possible to resist the conviction that there is present in the very life of man a force, a tendency, a bias, an element—call it what you will—hostile to righteousness. Always and everywhere, according to the testimony of poets, historians, moralists, and the founders of the great historical religions, men have failed to live the perfect life. The sense of failure has been most intense where the consciousness of personality and of moral freedom have been most vivid, and the ideal of goodness the noblest. In the life which is shared by the whole race, whatever other and noble elements there may be—and there are many—there is a power which makes for unrighteousness. This is what theologians mean when they speak of the race as a fallen race.

In the New Testament the universality of human sin is assumed, but about the mystery of its origin, except in the single passage in the Romans (chap. 5), the New Testament is silent. If we share the sin of the race we also share its redemption. The race was created in the eternal Son of God, and was destined in him to eternal perfection and eternal joy. Nor has the divine purpose been finally thwarted by human sin.

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This a very clear and interesting article of much breadth of thought and insight.

T. H. R.